

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 001577

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SA/INS, SA/RA
LONDON FOR POL/GURNEY, NSC FOR MILLARD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/20/2013

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: NEPAL: THIRD ROUND OF TALKS ENDS WITHOUT AGREEMENT

REF: KATHMANDU 1565

Classified By: DCM Robert K. Boggs for Reasons 1.5 (b,d).

11. (C) Summary. Amidst increased violence over the past several days, the third round of peace talks between the Government of Nepal and the Maoists concluded on August 19 without agreement. Both sides left open the possibility of returning for a fourth round of talks. However, a growing number of people within Nepal's security forces believe the cease-fire is fatally fragile. The Maoists' refusal to compromise on its demand for a constituent assembly is consistent with the insurgents' past practice of attempting to gain concessions from the government without compromising their own position. The Maoist leadership's ideological rigidity and belief in the weakness of the current government may lead the Maoists to break the cease-fire unilaterally. End Summary.

12. (C) The third round of peace talks between the Government of Nepal and the Maoists ended without agreement after a third day of meetings concluded on August 19 (reftel). While the GON agreed to two of three basic Maoist demands, namely an interim government and roundtable conference, the Maoist team torpedoed the negotiations by refusing to compromise on the remaining demand for a constituent assembly. The meeting disbanded with the understanding that the facilitators to the negotiations would recommend a date for the next round of talks. Press reports have suggested that at least a week will pass before the facilitators decide upon a date.

13. (C) The negotiating teams permitted journalists to attend the third day of talks, August 19, in Dang District in the mid-Western Terai. From statements made by the GON and Maoist negotiators that day, one senior Nepali journalist, in a telephone conversation with the DCM, reported his impression that the "talks are now dead." The journalist also reported that Dang was crawling with young Maoist cadre with guns in an attempt to demonstrate Maoist military might to the GON talk team and media representatives.

14. (C) Some NGOs and donor governments, including the UK, U.S. and India, have reacted favorably to the GON concept paper (reftel). Nepal's political parties, however, have complained publically that the paper does not take into consideration their agenda. On the other hand, some political leaders within both the Nepali Congress and CPN-UML have indicated privately their agreement with the principles outlined in the GON's concept paper. This paper outlines the GON's strategy for major social and political reforms and clearly states its core principles of maintaining a constitutional monarchy and multi-party democracy. The Maoists' outright rejection of the GON's paper has caused a growing number of people within Nepal's security forces to believe that the cease-fire is hanging only by a slender thread. Many military and police officials have indicated that they believe the chances of a unilateral break in the cease-fire by the Maoists are high. Estimates of when a break will occur range from a few days to a few weeks (the latter corresponding to the end of monsoon rains.)

Comment: Why the Maoist Insistence a Constituent Assembly?

15. (C) Why have the Maoists' categorically refused to compromise on its demand for a constituent assembly when the GON has offered so much? Although the answer is not clear, the following factors likely play a role:

-- First, if we take seriously what Maoists leaders have said in other contexts, there is every reason to believe that negotiations with the government are seen merely as a tactical ploy to further the Maoist goals of revolution and single-party rule. A constituent assembly is viewed as a bourgeois-democratic issue, not a communist one, and therefore has no long-term validity.

-- Second, throughout the current cease-fire the Maoist leadership has displayed consistent contempt for the code of conduct to which it has agreed. Likewise, Maoist activities to date suggest that the insurgents are not looking for a compromise solution through political reform but would accept

only total surrender by the state.

-- Third, the Maoists appear to be locked into an inflexible ideological mind-set. The Maoist leadership has looked often to historical examples, such as the Shining Path and the Russian Bolsheviks, as guides for its military and political strategy. An American academic specializing in insurgencies who has spoken at length with Baburam Bhattarai indicates that the Maoists' ideology appears to be based heavily on out-dated Marxist-Leninism, with Stalin regarded as an icon. This scholar reports that, if pushed on specific political and social policies, the Maoists fall back readily to dogmatism. Moreover, he said, Bhattarai continues to claim that communism is the solution to all problems while at the same time he is searching for new communist models for guidance on issues to which his old-style dogma offers no answers.

-- Fourth, the Maoist leadership regards the government as illegitimate and weak. The Maoists' negotiating strategy reportedly resembles most closely that of Gerry Adams, who used the argument that IRA rebels did not have to lay down their arms because the government was illegitimate and maintained an armed force. The rebels, by this reasoning, have a non-negotiable right to an army as well.

16. (C) Although both sides may agree to return for another round of talks, it appears that the Maoists are merely biding their time and do not intend to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict. End Comment.

MALINOWSKI